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SUPERFUND WEEK

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Smith takes over Superfund panel

Members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee have confirmed Sen. Robert Smith, R-N.H., as chairman of the Superfund subcommittee formerly lead by Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J.

The reconfigured subcommittee is now called the Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Control and Risk Assessment.

Smith, the leading Senate critic of Superfund's retroactive liability provisions, also is expected to lead the charge of Republicans and conservative Democrats to require that risk assessments at Superfund sites include cost-benefit analyses.

As the full committee had its first meeting of the 104th Congress Jan. 12, its new chairman, Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I., said prospects for action on Superfund are "less certain" than for the Safe Water Drinking Act and other issues carried over from last year. However, Chafee said he hoped for completion of Superfund reauthorization this year.

While Chafee named the decidedly conservative Smith as head of the Superfund panel, the Rhode Island senator is generally seen as a moderate.

Other members of the subcommittee had not been named as Superfund Week went to press. The committee's ratification of Smith to head the Superfund panel had been expected for several weeks (Superfund Week 12/16/94).

Republicans now have a 9-7 edge over Democrats on the full committee.

Scotus

The Supreme Court ruled Feb. 14 that the Superfund Act's provision for lender liability is unconstitutional. The ruling is expected to add fuel to lobbying by financial interests, including governmental entities, for Congress to finally take action to protect them from liability for contaminated properties they acquire through foreclosures, liens and other means.

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On Jan. 4, Reps. Fred Upton, R-Mich., and Billy Tauzin, D-La., introduced H.R. 200 to remove the threat from lenders.

EPA to ask PRPs to design Himco Dump cap

EPA plans to ask more than 40 PRPs to sign an administrative consent order to design an up to 58-acre geomembrane and clay cap for the Himco Dump NPL site in Elkhart, Ind.

The agency decided last week to pursue negotiations with the PRPs and will send notice letters shortly. EPA wants an answer by the end of March.

The design would take about 18 months to complete, so a construction start for the cap may be nearly two years away, and that's if PRPs do the design and later agree to implement the remedy.

If practicable, a 10-acre construction debris waste area will be consolidated with other landfill wastes to reduce the area needed to be capped to 48 acres.

In any event, gas collection will be required.

No pump-and-treat is called for as contaminated groundwater hasn't migrated significantly downgradient from the landfill. Leachate will be monitored, but won't be collected either, because the cap is expected to curtail leachate production.

But a risk assessment took note of potential future use of groundwater beneath the landfill. A residential area, including a mobile home park south of the landfill, used to depend on private wells, but is now supplied with municipal water.

In 1992, PRPs had to remove 71 drums from a test pit and liquids in a trench that contained 48% toluene. The drums and liquid contamination were unexpectedly encountered, because there had been no previous reports of drum disposal in the landfill.

(Continued on page 8)

Harbor Island soil fix may be bid this fall

A \$30 million to \$35 million thermal desulfurization project is solicited this fall at the Harbor Island

island. The project is for the cleanup under a consent order before Feb. 28. EPA issued special notice letters ring. The Port of Seattle is taking the lead in the project. It is interested in expanding its contaminated areas and redeveloping contaminated areas.

Kennedy/Tenks Consultants Inc.'s Federal Way, Wash., office was recently hired to design the remedy. The company is holding for PRP authorization to go ahead with a work plan, and EPA oversees the design — which should take about six months — starting this spring. Remedial action is scheduled to begin before the end of 1995.

About 90,000 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated soil will be

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 Refuse Hideaway air-stripping planned page 4
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McLaren/Hart to fix Potter site

Design has been completed for low temperature thermal desorption and stabilization of contaminated soil at the Potter's Septic Tank Service Pits in Marco, N.C.

EPA says more sampling needs to be done before design of a groundwater remedy can begin there.

Bechtel Environmental Inc. of Oak Ridge, Tenn., conducted the thermal treatment design at the fund-lead site and McLaren/Hart's Philadelphia office will begin construction of the remedy within a few weeks.

An upcoming test burn will run for two weeks. The goal is to treat 10 tons of soil per hour.

Soils to one foot below the existing grade will be excavated and treated. Soil below one foot will be tested, and, if contamination is confirmed, excavation will continue in one-foot intervals until clean soil is found.

Soil has polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, benzene, lead and xylene. Treated soil with chromium, lead, zinc and inadmissible levels of inorganics will be stabilized/solidified and either buried on-site or disposed as an off-site RCRA approved landfill.

Treated soil will be backfilled if it is clean enough, and the site will be graded and seeded.

The August 1992 ROD calls for chemical and physical treatment and air stripping to address groundwater contamination, but more sampling is needed. EPA suspects that cross-contamination has occurred between the upper and lower aquifers, and says it expects to have a clearer picture of the groundwater problem as early as this spring.

The ROD capital cost estimate for both the soil and groundwater remedies is \$11.8 million.

Contact: Beverly Hudson, EPA project manager, 800-435-9233, ext. 4116; Paul Huff, Bechtel project manager, 615-220-3000; Steve Canon, McLaren/Hart project manager, 610-521-8585.

BP ordered to remedy Ohio dump

EPA and the State of Ohio have ordered the BP Oil Co. to clean up its L-5 landfill in Lima, Ohio, to stop oily releases into the adjacent Ottawa River.

The remedy will include erecting an underground steel barrier wall. Also, extraction wells will be installed to pump contaminated water to BP's treatment plant, according to the state.

Temporary containment devices are currently in place at the site.

If the containment wall proves ineffective, the landfill may have to be capped.

BP acquired the landfill — which was closed 30 years ago — when it merged with Standard Oil in 1987.

Contact: Jim Ottmarson, Ohio EPA site coordinator, 419-352-4461.

Land farming may also be used for soils to be excavated with three or four abandoned underground storage tanks with fuel oil, gasoline and diesel have been removed. The Air Force acquired that tank problem when it purchased the adjacent farm property to extend the base fire line.

Two fire protection areas have petroleum contamination including jet fuel, waste oil, paint thinners and other combustible liquids. But testing so far is showing that the volatiles are being picked up from the shallow groundwater by a storm drainage system running through the sites and deposited in a drainage ditch.

Extensive sampling and other monitoring measures will be necessary to show if the natural mechanism is doing the job or just moving contaminants from one environmental medium to another.

The base will be conducting additional sampling and extensive monitoring of three landfills with inventory of contaminants including garbage, construction debris, solvent soils and petroleum products. The groundwater at two of the sites shows elevated levels of sulfates.

The base also will be inspecting at least 24 additional areas where underground tanks or petroleum contamination may be causing problems.

Contact: Marlene Seneca, base environmental coordinator, and Lee Stonestreet, Air Force Base Conversion Agency site manager, both at 317-688-2870.

Himco PRPs to be asked ... (From page 1)

For these reasons, EPA determined that a RCRA Subtitle C hazardous waste closure with a dual barrier cap was relevant and appropriate.

The lead PRP is Miles Laboratories of Elkhart, Ind. Other PRPs include many industries in and around Elkhart and the landfill owner, Charles Himco & Sons, which operated the private dump.

But as of earlier this week an environmental officer with Miles Laboratories said the company had received no notice from EPA and that the company had not made definite remediation plans. "Nothing is certain at this time," the official said.

The fund-lead RI/FS was done by the Cheboygan, Mich., office of SEC Donahue & Associates, which is now owned by Rust Environment and Infrastructure. Rust has decided to sell its remedial construction capabilities to OHM Corp. (Superfund Week 12/9/94).

Pre-design investigation will be needed at the Himco site.

Commonly, EPA pursues remedial design and remedial action through court-approved consent decrees, which are more enforceable than administrative orders because of the power of judicial review.

However, getting court approval of consent decrees is time-consuming and the agency opted to pursue a consent agreement with the PRPs to get design work started earlier. The agency will seek a consent decree for remedial action later, providing PRPs produce a conceptual design.

Court approval through a consent decree could take up to two years, so the agency's hope is to get a remedial design under way with an administrative agreement. The agency can obtain an agreement for the design alone without court approval.

The site is in a filled in marsh. As waste was brought into the dump, the marsh was filled in and then covered with sand. The elevation at the center of the site is 15 feet higher than original levels, but five feet above the original marsh on the perimeter of the dump.

Contact: W. Turpin Ballard, EPA project manager, 312-353-6083; R. Lennie Scott, Miles director of health, environment and safety, 219-262-7234; Larry Johnson, EPA attorney, 312-886-6609.